

knows. On the other hand a politician, having to act, or to pronounce an opinion at a moment's notice, must make up his mind with rapidity and must have a very definite opinion too. Macaulay had the mental habits of the politician, not those of a historian. His political opinions were fully formed at an extremely early date ; they never altered ; there is no sign of any gradual development or growth about them. He was a politician of the kind people praise as ' singularly consistent'. His historical opinions were mostly formed just as early as his political opinions, and he clung to them with the same constancy. For his peculiar intellectual gift was one which tended to produce tenacity rather than open-mindedness. One of his critics has pointed this out. James Spedding¹ was in the habit of suggesting a conjectural excuse for Macaulay's occasional inaccuracies and for his obstinacy in refusing to correct his mistakes. Both peculiarities were with much probability ascribed to habitual reliance on a marvellous memory, The errors which could not always be avoided during his youthful accumulation of various knowledge became stereotyped in a recollection which probably reproduced with unflinching fidelity the original impression/ ¹ Macaulay's mental habits increased this reliance on his memory. His impressions and his recollections were singularly vivid and concrete ; they became as real to him

as if they were palpable external things. His
sister once
said to him that she was surprised at the great
accuracy of his
information, considering how desultory his
reading had
been. ' My accuracy as to facts', he said* ^f I owe
to a cause
which many men would not confess. It is due to
my love of
castle-building. The past is in my mind soon
constructed
into a romance/ He then went on to describe
the way in
¹ Spedding, *Evenings with a Reviewer* (1881), i p. xxiv.